

# What's Up With Marijuana?



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# What's Up With Marijuana?

What's up with marijuana is what's down about the lives of too many young people. Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States and tends to be the first illegal drug that teens use. The fact is that there are increasing numbers of marijuana users who are junior high school, as well as high school age.

Unfortunately, according to recent surveys among high school and junior high school students, many of America's young people believe that the drug is not harmful. One reason could be that young people smoke it openly in music videos and films, and there's a lot of talk about marijuana's acceptance in the lyrics of many popular songs. Too many youth dance to the music, watch the films without criticism, sing the songs, and wear the clothing that glamorizes marijuana use.

**GET IT STRAIGHT!** Using marijuana has negative effects! Sometimes the drug can make you feel like you're moving in slow motion, and you may not pay real close attention to things either. For older teenagers and adults, using marijuana and driving can cause car crashes, just like when a person drinks and drives.

**STREET NAMES FOR MARIJUANA:** Blunt, Pot, Grass, Reefer, Ganja, Joint, Weed, Mary Jane, Sinsemilla, Roach, Thai Sticks, Smoke, and Dope.

**THE LOOK:** Marijuana is a brown or greenish color. It is a leafy, flowery, or bud tobacco-like substance.

**MARIJUANA COMES FROM:** a hemp plant called "Cannabis Sativa" which grows indoors and outdoors in many parts of the world - including the United States. (Hashish and hashish oil are also drugs that come from cannabis.) Marijuana grown in other countries accounts for most of the marijuana used in the United States. However, a great deal of marijuana is also grown in the United States. The drug, regardless of where it's grown, contains hundreds of chemicals. One of the main high-causing chemicals is called THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). The THC content in today's marijuana is much higher than in marijuana that was available 20 or 30 years ago. People who grow marijuana have developed plants that have a high THC content - the more THC, the more potent and dangerous the "weed" is. The amount of THC and other chemicals varies greatly in different marijuana plants. Traces of these chemicals remain in the body long after they enter, which could prevent a person from getting a job if drug testing is required.

**MARIJUANA USE:** Marijuana is usually smoked, but can be eaten. The effects of marijuana that is smoked can be felt within minutes and usually last three to four hours. Many users often feel the effects the next day.

**MARIJUANA IS ILLEGAL:** and if you're caught with the drug, you could receive a large fine and/or go to jail. If you are caught more than once, or if you look like you're going to sell the drug, the punishment is more harsh. Marijuana laws vary from state to state. However, keep in mind that carrying marijuana around is illegal in all 50 states, and that the laws in some foreign countries are even stricter than they are here.

### ***MARIJUANA, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS...***

- Hard to keep track of time and/or reduced short-term memory.
- Unable to perform tasks requiring concentration, like driving, swimming, playing sports, reading, and writing.
- Temporary increase in heart rate.
- Difficulty understanding simple ideas.
- Paranoia and hallucinations (visions of things not really there).
- Body's ability to fight diseases is weakened.
- Lung cancer.
- Interference with normal daily activities.
- Undependable and irresponsible behavior.
- Difficulty learning and making wise decisions.
- Loss of physical and mental motivation.

When someone asks you to sell drugs and tells you that you'll make a lot of money, don't believe the hype! You're at the bottom of the money-making pyramid, which means that you'll be making pennies compared to what others in the pyramid make. Although selling drugs is a quick way to make money, you risk everything that's important to you, like: not getting into trouble with your family, not getting kicked off of sports teams, not losing friends, or not going to jail.